

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 HA-05 AID-05 SSO-00 NSCE-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 /070 W

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FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1810

INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA PRIORITY

USMISSION USUN PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L GABORONE 0761

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDEV RH BC SREF

SUBJ: RHODESIA; MOVEMENT OF REFUGEES

1. IN MEETINGS WITH PRESIDENTIAL SECRETARY LEGWAILA AND MINEXTAFF PERMSEC MPOTOKWANE ON SUBJECTS REPORTED SEPTELS, MPOTOKWANE NOTED "EXTRAORDINARY INFLUX" OF PERSONS FROM RHODESIA TO BOTSWANA IN THE PAST WEEK TO TEN DAYS. TOTAL NUMBER OF REFUGEES FROM RHODESIA NOW EXCEEDS 5500. GOB OFFICIALS SAID 500 REFUGEES HAD COME ACROSS IN A 48-HOUR PERIOD, A POINT CONFIRMED MARCH 16 BY UNHCR REP PERKINS.

2. IN DISCUSSION WITH GOB OFFICIALS THERE HAS BEEN SPECULATION CONCERNING REASONS FOR THIS SUDDEN (VIRTUALLY UNPRECEDENTED) INFLUX. FOLLOWING ARE THREE THEORIES THAT HAVE BEEN ADVANCED BY RESPONSIBLE OFFICIALS LOCALLY:

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A) UNHCR REP PERKINS SAYS PRIVATELY HE HAS "SOLIDA EVIDENCE" FROM SEVERAL SOURCES THAT ZAPU HAS GIVEN ORDERS TO STEP UP RECRUITMENT IN THE WAKE OF THE SALISBURY AGREEMENT;

B) GOB OFFICIALS LEGWAILA AND MPOTOKWANE TAKE THE VIEW THAT SHARP INCREASE IN REFUGEE FLOW REPRESENTS A VOTE OF

NO-CONFIDENCE IN SALISBURY INTERNAL AGREEMENTS, THAT IF AGREEMENTS HAD POPULAR APPEAL, PEOPLE WOULD NOT BE LEAVING THE COUNTRY; RATHER THEY WOULD TEND TO STAY IN THE HOPE THAT PEACE WOULD FOLLOW; AND

C) AN ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATION ADVANCED BY MPOTOKWANE AND CONCURRED IN BY UK HICOM ON BASIS OF HIS REPORTS, IS THAT PEOPLE HAVE LEFT WESTERN RHODESIA BECAUSE OF STEPPED UP GUERRILLA ATTACKS AND RHODESIA REPRISALS. IN ANY EVENT, THERE IS NO DISAGREEMENT WITH THE BROAD CONCLUSION THAT THE INTERNAL AGREEMENT DOES NOT CARRY SUFFICIENT PROMISE TO PREVENT RECRUITING ACTIVITIES FROM BEING SUCCESSFUL OR TO DETER PERSONS FROM LEAVING RHODESIA.

3. COMMENT: IN ABSENCE OF A REFERENDUM OR OTHER MEANS OF CONSULTING RHODESIAN OPINION, WE BELIEVE MOVEMENT OF REFUGEES IS A SIGNIFICANT INDICATION OF ATTITUDES TOWARD THE INTERNAL AGREEMENT ANNOUNCED IN SALISBURY. GOB AND UNHCR REPS SAID THEY WOULD BE INTERESTED IN INFORMATION ON DIRECTION AND EXTENT OF REFUGEE ACTIVITY IN MOZAMBIQUE. WOULD APPRECIATE ANY INDICATIONS EMBASSY MAPUTO MAY OBTAIN.

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